

Technology Report

Copyright infringement is a very delicate issue that schools and non-profit organizations are dealing with in the past decade. Due to the advancement in technology and the accessibility of copyrighted material on the Internet, the delineation of what is allowed to use in the classrooms keeps thinning.

Teachers and administrator should be informed and up to date in the latest copyright laws and regulations to avoid getting involved in lawsuits and incurring in penalties charged for infringement.

It is especially important for teachers to be informed since they are more prompt to allow for inappropriate use or display of copyrighted material.

“Classroom videos are almost entirely okay as long as they are instructionally based. It can be a Disney movie, a television broadcast, or a DVD as long as it bears on the lesson at hand. If there are hooting boys watching an action movie for the ‘movie club,’ then it is not okay. Entertainment (or reward) requires a license (figure \$25 a pop for Disney, for example).” Davidson, H. (2005). Copyright Primer for Administrators. *Technology & Learning*. Research Library pg.S2

Showing copyrighted DVD’s or tapes for child care at legitimate school events is permissible only with a license. The copyright law explains that some videotapes allow for public performance without a license, but it is rare and almost never allowed by Hollywood media. It is especially important to look for a warning in the video tape or DVD stating that it is

only intended for “Home Use”, since this is a common abuse, for example during the winter months when students cannot go outside to play during recess, or during afterhours school meetings when parents attend with their children.

Due to the common occurrence in school settings this requires special attention from administrators to educate school personnel and teachers to comply with the laws of copyrighted material.

A solution for school districts and campuses would be to develop an instructional use for the materials, such as analyzing the media for character and plot development or main idea and summarization of the story. Other ways to avoid copyright infringement are the acquisition of authentic instructional media or a license for entertainment, or even allow instructional time for student-created videos that would engage them in technology use and later in sharing their own movies to other students.

Another copyright concern that should be given attention to is that of the copyrightable creations by teachers produced within working hours. Stroder (2006) explains: “When a district employee creates a copyrightable work, such as a computer program, a workbook, or a photograph, and the work is created within the scope of the employee’s job, the district is legally the ‘author.’” “Ownership of copyright lies initially with the author, which means the district or school owns all rights in all copyrightable works produced by its faculty.”

Most teachers and district employees are unaware of these laws and proper professional development sessions should take place to avoid further copyright issues and infringements.

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